



Components of a comprehensive university-community civic engagement assessment strategy

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Summary

Colleges and universities apply a broad range of assets, skills, and expertise through a variety of mechanisms, including service learning and civic engagement activities, to the range of problems that communities experience. Yet, few institutions have successfully integrated campus-wide tracking and assessment of such efforts. Lacking such a system, it is difficult to effectively demonstrate the value and the impacts of engagement. Consequently, this may limit the ability of institutions to galvanize both internal and external support for expansion of their efforts.

To help other institutions in the development of a comprehensive system of tracking and impact assessment, this poster presentation will reflect the characteristics of an effective research system. To do so, the authors' poster will present and describe a model/system developed and implemented that is used to examine and assess the civic engagement activities at Widener University, a comprehensive metropolitan university with a broad and comprehensive assortment of service learning and engagement projects. This systematic approach adds value to the University and helps to establish a sound model that can serve other higher education institutions and organizations as well.

As such, this poster presentation will show the design issues, methods, tools, and ethical concerns involved with the research system at Widener. It is intended that the viewers will leave with: (1) skills for monitoring and evaluating their projects, which includes identifying, measuring, and tracking the project(s) constituencies, outputs/service units, and possible methodologies; (2) knowledge of the strengths provided by various methods; and (3) proprietary and site-developed software tools, tracking instruments, and the costs/benefits of each. Finally, the poster will address ways to enhance compliance with monitoring activities.

References

There were no references provided with this proposal.